

PROJECT MEGAPOP

Raise land. Raise followers. Raise hell.

FOR 1 TO 4
GODS



INSTRUCTION MANUAL

A god game of land, faith, progress and regrettable decisions

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A WORD BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This manual covers everything a new god needs, and several things an experienced god would rather not think about. You do not have to read it in order. You do not have to read it at all: the game has a tutorial, tips that appear when something new happens, and an Advisor who will tell you about every disaster in great detail and with poor timing.

But gods who read the manual, as the saying goes, smite with more confidence.



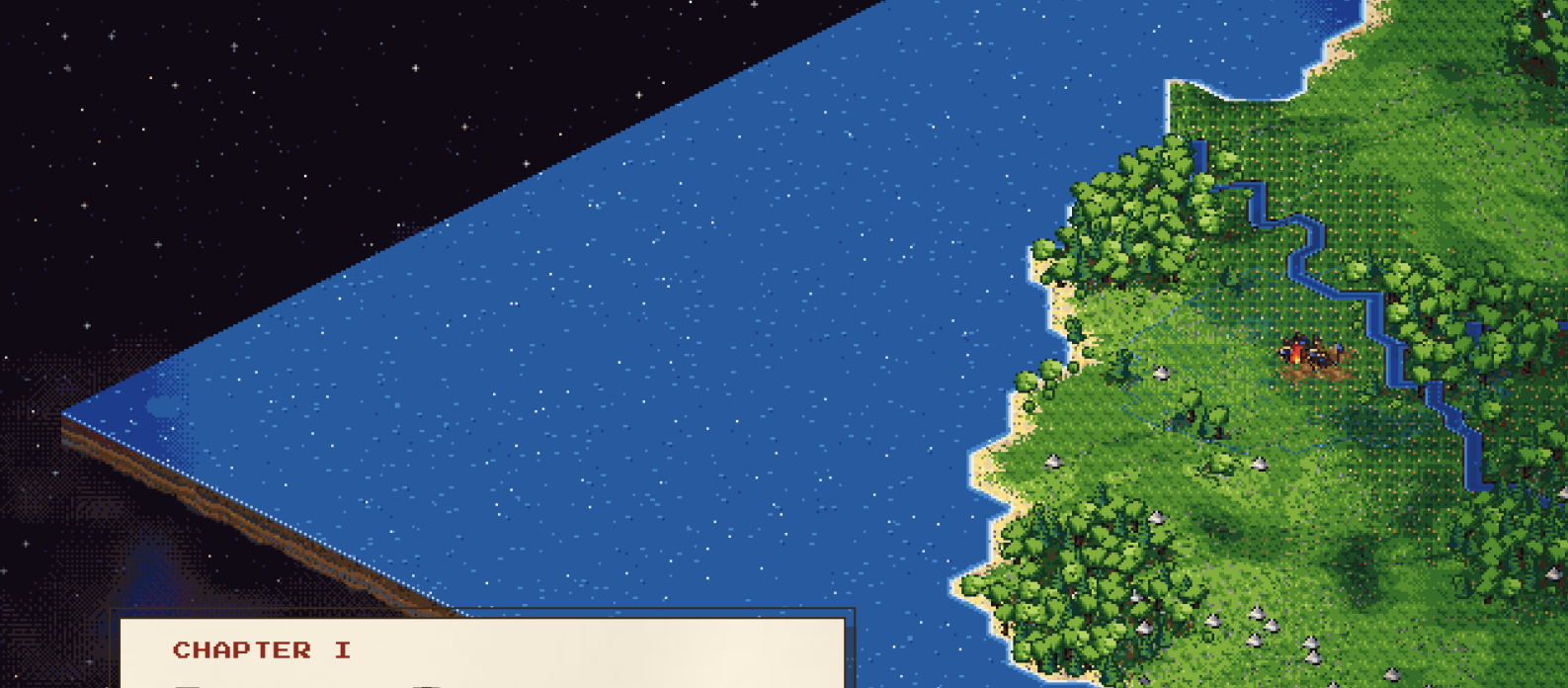
PHOTOSENSITIVITY WARNING

Some miracles, disasters and weapons in this game produce bright flashes, flickering light and screen shaking (lightning, meteors, EMP and nuclear detonations in particular). If you or anyone in your household is sensitive to flashing light, turn off **Screen effects** in the menu before playing, play in a well-lit room, and stop if you feel unwell.



“Every god starts small. Most of them stay that way.”

— OLD HEAVENLY PROVERB



CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

Before the first campfire there was nothing much to speak of. There was land, because land is patient. There was sea, because the land needed something to sit in. There were a great many rocks, some trees and a quantity of weather. What there was not, anywhere, was anybody who *believed* in anything.

Then one evening, on a small island in a very large sea, twenty-five damp people sat around a fire that nobody could remember lighting. One of them looked up at the sky and asked who had done it. Nobody knew. So, being people, they decided that *somebody* must have, and that this somebody was probably watching, and probably had opinions about the correct way to cook a goose.

That was you.

You did not exist until they wondered about you, and the moment they wondered, you did. This is how it works for gods: belief comes first and the god arrives shortly afterwards, slightly out of breath, holding whatever powers the believers happened to imagine. Your first followers imagined someone who could lift a hill, bless a turnip field and, if pushed, throw lightning at the people across the river. You can do exactly that. Nothing more, yet.

THE CURRENCY OF HEAVEN

Every prayer said in your name becomes **mana**, the only money the heavens accept. A god with many followers can move mountains, quite literally. A god with none fades into a vague feeling people get in old churches. So you will want more followers, and happier ones, and you will want them to pray a great deal.

Unfortunately your followers have plans of their own. They will farm and build and argue, wander off to found new villages in places you did not approve, invent the wheel, then writing, then gunpowder, then the committee. The cleverer they become, the less they pray. By the time they split the atom, some of them will be wondering aloud whether you were ever there at all. You were. You still are. You are simply more of a background presence.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The trouble is that you were not the only one. On the same island, on the same night, other people sat around other fires and wondered the same thing, and other gods came blinking into the world. There are never enough believers for everybody. Every soul that prays to a rival is a soul that does

not pray to you, and every village that falls to a rival army starts praying to *its* god with remarkable speed.

So the gods compete. They do it slowly at first, with fertile fields and flattering miracles, then with spears, then with rifles, then with things that come down from the sky on columns of fire. The heavens do not forbid any of this. The heavens, frankly, find it entertaining.

THE SEVEN WORLDS

No world lasts for ever under the attention of quarrelling gods. Continents get raised and lowered and occasionally vaporised. When a world is spent, a victorious god may gather the most faithful into an **Ark** and carry them to the next world, where the whole business starts again with a slightly more experienced god and a congregation that has seen things.

There are seven such worlds. They run from a quiet cradle valley to a ruined, glowing battlefield where every surviving god finally meets for **the Last Congregation**. Only one of them, the

prophecies say, will leave it with any followers at all. The prophecies were written by followers, and followers are not always right.

THE ADVISOR SPEAKS

4000 BC The Mudborn awaken beside a fire they do not remember lighting. They assume it was you.

3981 BC Settlers have founded Thatchby. They named it after the first thing they saw.

AD 1235 The oil deposit near Ironvale is exhausted. The miners are staring at a hole.

You will get to know the **Advisor**. It is a minor celestial functionary assigned to every new god to keep the ledger: births, deaths, discoveries, wars, and the exact number of goats lost in each flood. It reports all of this in the log at the bottom of the screen in a tone that suggests it has seen many gods come and go. It has.

This manual was compiled from the Advisor's notes, with the more upsetting marginalia removed.



CHAPTER II

THE PANTHEON

Four small gods woke on the first night, and four peoples went to sleep believing in them. In most worlds you will answer to **Oomph the Unbothered**, god of the Mudborn, marked in blue. The heavens are not fussy about names, though: in a multiplayer world each human god takes one of the four, and the remaining ones are played by the other gods themselves, who need no help from anyone.

OOMPH THE UNBOtherED

GOD OF **THE MUDborn** • BLUE

Your usual name. Oomph is calm, patient and unreasonably confident about river valleys. The Mudborn build with clay, name their towns after puddles (Mudhollow, Loamford, Puddleworth) and are fond of cheese. A well-rounded people: moderately curious, moderately devout, moderately likely to hit you with a club.



GRElda OF THE SLIGHTLY RAISED HILL

GOD OF **THE HILLfolk** • RED

The most warlike of the four. The Hillfolk live in stony places (Karnak Hill, Redcairn, Axeholm) and regard any flat land as an insult. Grela is aggressive, expansionist and industrious, and will start a war the moment she feels she can win it. When she sends an envoy, count your fingers afterwards.



PONTIFAX THE DAMP

GOD OF **THE PEBble Accord** • GOLD

A curious, restless god whose people spread across golden farmland (Goldfurrow, Barleymouth, Honeydew). The Pebble Accord research fast and settle far, and pray a little less than they should. Pontifax is the least aggressive of the pantheon, until someone blocks his roads.



MOTHer GRAVELMOUTH

GOD OF **THE DAMp Kingdom** • PURPLE

The most devout of the gods and the most persuasive. The Damp Kingdom (Violetmere, Fogbottom, Vespers) prays constantly, converts neighbours with alarming ease and considers every town in the world a future parish. Watch your borders for her missionaries.



KNOWING THE ENEMY

Every people carries its god's colour on its banners, army standards and borders, and each god has a **flag shape** of its own, so you can tell them apart even at night or in a snowstorm. The pennant above each settlement is its banner; the tall standard carried in front of each army shows who it belongs to. A small number floating over an army or fleet gives its strength (you can turn these labels off in the menu).

Rival gods are not scripted villains. Each has a **temperament** (aggression, curiosity, devotion, appetite for land and for industry) and plays the same game you do, by the same rules: it shapes land, casts miracles, trades, forms alliances, spies, and declares war when it believes it can win. Their temperament colours what they think of you, which you can read at any time in the diplomacy panel.

FREE STATES

Two more colours exist: **green** and **orange**. These belong to no god at all. They mark **free states**, rebel towns that broke away from an overstretched empire (see *Civil War*). Their people still pray to their old god, but they no longer take orders from anyone.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

Scouts report a rival camp called Karnak Hill. It looks smug.

Rumours say the Hillfolk have entered the Medieval era. This is concerning, in a general way.



CHAPTER III

GETTING STARTED

Project Megapop runs in your web browser, using WebGPU to draw its pixel-art world. You can play it online with nothing to install, or run your own copy from the game folder.

WHAT YOU NEED

A current version of **Google Chrome** or **Microsoft Edge** (WebGPU is switched on by default), or **Firefox** with WebGPU enabled. Any graphics card from the last several years will do. The game draws a small image and scales it up with crisp square pixels, so it is kind to modest machines.

STARTING THE GAME

- **Online:** play in your browser at <https://waldtier.com/games>. Nothing to install.
- **Windows:** double-click **run.bat**. A small window starts the server and your browser opens the game.
- **Linux / macOS:** run **./run.sh**.
- **By hand:** **python tools/serve.py 8000**, then visit **http://localhost:8000**.

Browsers only allow WebGPU pages from a proper address, which is why a local copy comes with its own tiny server: opening *index.html* directly as a file will not work. Keep the server window open while you play; it also runs the relay for multiplayer games.

THE TITLE SCREEN

Begin Creation starts a new world with the options above it. **Campaign: the Seven Worlds** takes you through the linked story scenarios. **Multiplayer** lets up to four human

PROJECT
MEGAPOP

GOD GAME · CIVILIZATION SIMULATION ·
MACRO RTS

World seed	World size
63661	Normal (128)
Rival gods	Rival difficulty
1	Normal
Disasters	Time limit
Normal	None
Civil wars	☒ Fog of war
Normal	☒ Ascension victory
	☒ Cultural victory

Begin Creation

Campaign: the Seven Worlds

Multiplayer

Continue saved world

Import save file...

You are a god. Your followers live, farm, build, research and fight on their own. You shape the land, set priorities and cast miracles. Flatten land so they can build, bless fields, smite rival armies.

FIG. 1 The title screen. Choose your world, then press *Begin Creation*.

gods share a world. **Continue saved world** loads your last save from the browser and **Import save file...** loads a save you exported earlier.

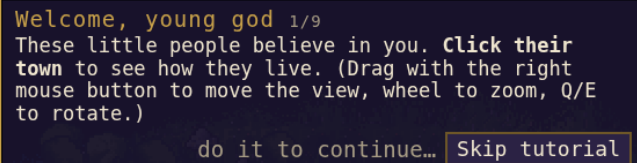
NEW WORLD OPTIONS

OPTION	WHAT IT DOES
World seed	The number the world is grown from. The same seed always makes the same world: share good ones with friends.
World size	From small islands to large continents. Bigger worlds give longer, slower games.
Rival gods	How many computer-controlled gods share the world (one to three).
Rival difficulty	<i>Easy, Normal, Hard, Brutal</i> . Changes how early rivals start wars, how big an edge they want before attacking, their mana income, how fast their miracles recharge and how long they leave a human god alone at the start.
Disasters	<i>Off, Rare, Normal, Apocalyptic</i> . Droughts, wildfires, plague, storms, eruptions, meteors, tsunamis.
Time limit	None, or a fixed length after which the highest score wins.
Civil wars	<i>Off, Normal, Frequent</i> . Whether overstretched empires break apart.
Fog of war	Hide what your followers have not seen.
Ascension / Cultural victory	Allow winning by technology or by faith, not only by conquest.

YOUR FIRST HOUR

The first time you play, a short **tutorial** appears at the top of the screen. It asks you to do nine simple things and moves on as soon as you do each one: select your town, read its

status, flatten some ground, bless the fields, move a priority slider, look at research, open diplomacy, and learn how war works. You can skip it at any time, and restart it from the menu.



Welcome, young god 1/9
 These little people believe in you. Click their town to see how they live. (Drag with the right mouse button to move the view, wheel to zoom, Q/E to rotate.)
 do it to continue... [Skip tutorial](#)

FIG. 2 The tutorial waits for you to act. “Do it to continue...”

After the tutorial, one-off **tips** pop up the first time something new happens: the first famine, the first overcrowded town, your first harbour or airfield, a rival getting the bomb. Each appears only once; switch them off in the menu when you no longer need them.



HINT FROM THE HIGH PRIEST

In the first minutes, do three things: **flatten** the bumpy ground next to your first camp so they can build, cast **Fertility** on the green land beside it, and leave the game running. Followers are very good at being followers. Your job is to make their lives easier, not to do their work.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIEW FROM ABOVE

You watch your world from above, the way gods do, in an isometric view you can pan, zoom and turn. Everything you need is around the edges of the screen, and nearly everything can be hovered for more detail.



- 1 **Top bar.** Your name and people, your **mana** (current / maximum), total followers, settlements, soldiers, average faith, your most advanced era and the date.
- 2 **Game speed.** Pause, 1×, 2×, 4×, 8×. **Space** pauses, **+** / **-** change speed. You can still cast miracles and give orders while paused.
- 3 **Diplomacy** (**G**) and the **menu** (**Esc**). A red mark on the diplomacy button means an envoy is waiting.
- 4 **Power bar.** Every miracle and command, with its hotkey, mana cost and recharge. Locked powers are greyed out; hover them to see why.
- 5 **Divine Will.** Eight priority sliders that steer every one of your settlements.
- 6 **Doctrines** and the **rivals** list: every god's followers and share of the world's worship.
- 7 **The Advisor.** News of births, deaths, discoveries, wars and disasters. Collapse it with the **-** button.

- 8 **Minimap** and **overlay** buttons. Click the minimap to jump there; the white diamond is your view.
- 9 **Side panel**. Details of whatever you selected: a settlement, army or fleet.
- 10 **The world**. Numbers over towns and armies are their size; the dashed ring marks the selected town's territory.

MOVING AROUND

INPUT	ACTION
W A S D / arrows, right- or middle-drag	Pan the view
Mouse wheel, PgUp PgDn	Zoom (½×, 1×, 2×, 3×)
Q E	Rotate the view by 90°
Tab / Home	Next settlement / your capital
Left click	Select a settlement, army or fleet
Right click	Order the selected army or fleet; otherwise cancel
Esc	Cancel power, close panel, open menu

CASTING POWERS

Pick a power from the bar, or with its key: 1...0 for the first ten, Shift+number for the next ten, Alt+number for the rest. The cursor shows the area it will touch. Click the world to cast. Raise and Lower keep working while you hold the button down. Right-click or Esc puts the power away.

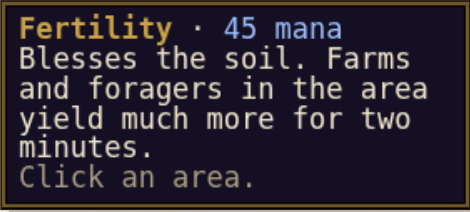


FIG. 3 Hover any power to read its cost, what it does and how to aim it.

Each power has a **mana cost** and a **recharge time**. Most can only be cast in certain places: sculpting and blessings need your own *territory*, while lightning, earthquakes and their friends need land you can currently *see*. A few, like Divine Vision and Promised Land, can go anywhere at all.

OVERLAYS

The buttons under the minimap tint the world to show hidden information: territory (T), soil fertility (F), resources (R), population (P), faith (†), technology level (⚙), your own worshippers (☼), pollution and fallout (☢) and military threat (⚔). See the Quick Reference at the back of this book for examples of each.



SAVING YOUR WORLD

Open the menu with Esc and choose **Save world**. Saves live in your browser; **Export save file** writes a file you can keep, back up or send to a friend, and **Import save file** on the title screen loads it again.

CHAPTER V

FOLLOWERS & SETTLEMENTS

You do not command your followers. You influence them. They decide for themselves where to farm, what to build and when to leave home, and they are remarkably good at it. Understanding what they want is the whole art of being a god.

SETTLEMENTS

Your people live in settlements that grow from a **Camp** to a **Village**, **Town**, **City** and finally a **Metropolis** as their population and buildings increase. Each settlement claims the land around it as **territory**, which widens as it grows. Territory is where your followers work, and where most of your gentler miracles may be cast.

Everything in a settlement is local: its own food store, its own workers, its own technologies, its own faith and morale. Two towns of the same god can be centuries apart in knowledge if no road connects them.

GROWTH

A settlement grows when it is fed, housed, healthy and reasonably content. Its **Status** tab shows the growth rate per minute and, crucially, what is holding it back. There are four limits:

- **Food.** Farms, foragers and fishing boats feed the town. Hunger stops growth, then kills.
- **Housing.** Every house holds a number of people. A town slightly over capacity grows slowly; one far over stops entirely and some of its people leave.
- **Health.** Crowding, pollution and plague make people sick;

medicine and sanitation help.

- **Morale.** Hunger, crowding, war, threats and godly wrath hurt it; faith, victories and prosperity help.

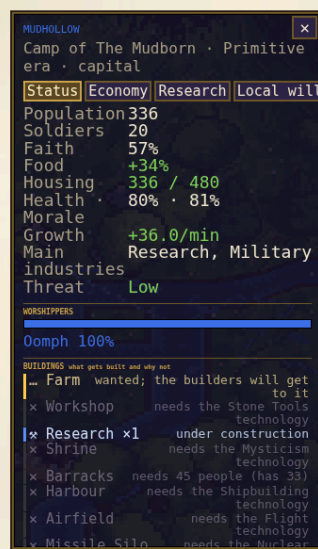


FIG. 4 *The Status tab: the numbers, what limits growth, current problems and the Buildings list, which explains what is being built next and why other things are not.*

FLAT LAND

This is the single most important thing in the game: **people only build on flat ground.**

Houses, workshops, shrines and most other buildings need a perfectly level plot; farms tolerate a gentle slope. A town surrounded by hills cannot grow no matter how well fed it is. When a town has run out of room its Status tab says so, and the Advisor will mention it with some reproach.

Use **Flatten** next to crowded towns, and **Raise** or **Lower** to reshape larger areas. Remember that water flows downhill: dig a hollow next to a river and you have made a lake; raise a wall across a valley and you have made a dam, and whatever was upstream is now underwater.

MIGRATION & NEW TOWNS

When a settlement gets crowded, groups of settlers pack their belongings and walk off to found a new one somewhere promising, usually on fertile flat land with water

nearby, a sensible distance from home. You can guide them: cast **Promised Land** on a spot and migrants will head there. Settler parties can be intercepted by enemies or drowned by careless gods, so mind where you put new lakes.

THE TOWN PANEL

Click a settlement to open its panel. It has four tabs:

Status – population, soldiers, faith, food, housing, health, morale, growth, main industries, threat, pollution, plague and trade prosperity, then worshippers by god, current

problems and the buildings list.

Economy – how its workers are divided between food, lumber, mining, building, research, industry, military and religion, and its stockpile of goods and weapons.

Research – what it knows, what it is learning and what each new technology still needs.

Local will – specialise the town, build roads, and override your global priorities for this town alone.

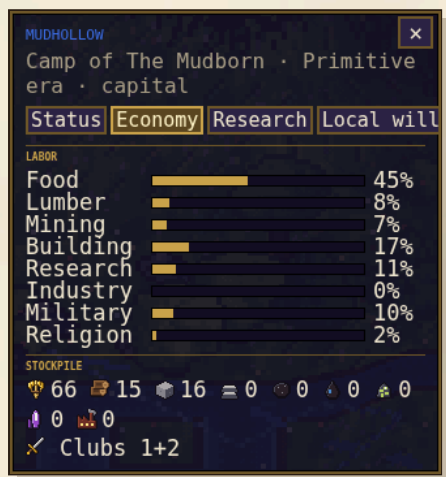


FIG. 5 Economy: labour and stockpile.

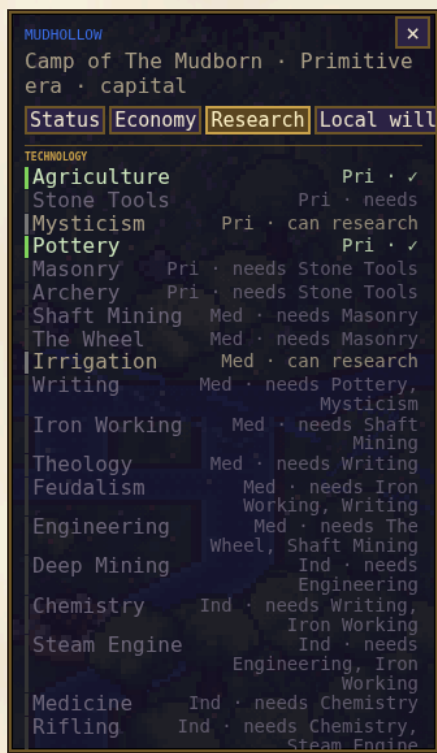


FIG. 6 Research: known and next technologies.



FIG. 7 Local will: specialisations and roads.

SPECIALISING A TOWN

The **Local will** tab offers six one-click specialisations. Each sets that town's own priorities so it concentrates on one job while the rest of your empire follows your global sliders:

SPECIALISATION	CONCENTRATES ON
Breadbasket	Food, for itself and linked towns
Mining town	Stone, iron, coal, oil and uranium
Academy	Research above all
Forge town	Industry and weapons
Fortress	Soldiers and defences; builds barracks, airfields, silos
Holy city	Faith: spreads your worship, more mana

Untick *Override global priorities* to return the town to your general will.

FOREIGN SETTLEMENTS

You can click a rival's settlement too. You will see what your followers know about it: its size, soldiers, faith and who its people pray to. Once you have learned **Espionage**, this is also where you send spies.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

Famine in Stumpfield. The people have begun to look at the livestock differently.

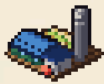
A party of 12 settlers departs Mudhollow. They took the good pot.

Mudhollow has no flat land left to build on. Perhaps a god could flatten something?

CHAPTER VI

BUILDINGS

Your followers build whatever they think the town needs, from a list shaped by your priorities, their technology and the land available. Every kind of building is rebuilt in the style of each new era: a *Lore Hut* becomes a *Monastery Library*, then a *University*, a *Research Institute* and finally a *Quantum Lab*.

BUILDING	PRIMITIVE	MEDIEVAL	INDUSTRIAL	ATOMIC	POST-HUMAN
SETTLEMENT CENTER Heart of the town; its tier.	 Great Hut	 Stone Hall	 Town Hall	 Civic Tower	 Arcology Spire
HOUSE Homes. Housing limits growth.	 Hut	 Cottage	 Rowhouse	 Apartment Block	 Hab Stack
FARM Food. Needs fertile soil.	 Tilled Plot	 Windmill Fields	 Barn & Silo	 Agro Complex	 Vertical Farm
MINE On a deposit, any slope.	 Open Pit	 Timber Shaft	 Steel Headframe	 Excavation Site	 Molecular Extractor
WORKSHOP Tools, weapons, industry.	 Craft Hut	 Smithy	 Factory	 Power Plant	 Nano-Fabricator
RESEARCH Research. Larger towns.	 Lore Hut	 Monastery Library	 University	 Research Institute	 Quantum Lab
BARRACKS Soldiers and defence.	 Training Yard	 Stone Barracks	 Brick Barracks	 Military Base	 Mech Bay

BUILDING	PRIMITIVE	MEDIEVAL	INDUSTRIAL	ATOMIC	POST-HUMAN
SHRINE Worship, faith, conversion.	 Standing Stones	 Church	 Cathedral	 Data Sanctum	 Neural Cathedral
HARBOUR Fishing, sea trade, warships. Shores.	 Fishing Pier	 Harbour	 Steam Docks	 Container Port	 Orbital Dock

Why Is Nothing Being Built?

The Status tab's **Buildings** list answers this for every kind of building. Each line is marked *built*, *under construction*, *wanted but waiting* (for wood, stone or flat land) or *locked*, with the reason: a technology not yet known, a town too

small, a priority too low, or a limit for your civilisation. The fix is nearly always one of three things: flatten some land, raise the matching priority, or wait.

Special Buildings

Four buildings appear only with the right knowledge and a large enough town, and look the same in every era:



MISSILE SILO
Nuclear Weapons. Turns uranium, iron and oil into warheads (up to three).



MISSILE DEFENCE
Missile Defense. Stores interceptors that shoot down incoming missiles and bombers.



AIRFIELD
Flight. Needs oil. Builds and launches up to four bombers.



ASCENSION PROJECT
Ascension Theory. The great work that wins the game. One per god.

Military buildings are only built when the town's **Military** priority is high enough or when you are at war: the silo needs Military 40 or more, the airfield 35 or more. Harbours need a shoreline; mines need a deposit and can sit on steep ground. Every new building also needs building materials: **wood** for the early ones, **stone** and **iron** for the later ones, and **quantumite** for the Ascension Project.



HINT FROM THE HIGH PRIEST

If a town keeps saying *no flat land*, flatten a patch two or three cells wide right next to the town centre. Buildings close to the centre are built first and defended best.



CHAPTER VII

RESOURCES, ROADS & TRADE

A town lives on what it can reach. Food and wood come from the land around it; everything else must be dug out of the ground, carried along roads or shipped across the sea.

RESOURCE	SOURCE AND USE
	Food Farms, foraging, fishing. Eaten every day; stored in pots once you know Pottery.
	Wood Cut from forests near town. The first building material. Forests regrow, slowly.
	Stone From quarries and mines. Needed for most buildings after the first huts.
	Iron Mined from iron deposits. Swords, tools, rifles, tanks, silos.
	Coal Mined. Needed for Chemistry, the Steam Engine and rifles.
	Oil Pumped by oil wells (Oil Drilling). Tanks, bombers, warheads.
	Uranium Mined deep. Nuclear power and nuclear weapons.
	Quantumite Glowing crystal on the highest peaks and in meteor craters. Mechs, Nanotech, Ascension.

Workshops turn wood and stone into **tools**, which make every worker better, and turn iron, coal and oil into **weapons** for the town's soldiers. The town's stockpile is listed in its *Economy* tab.

DEPOSITS & MINING

Minerals lie in deposits scattered through the rock, some near the surface and some deep. The **Resources** overlay shows the ones your followers know about. Early miners

only reach shallow deposits; *Shaft Mining*, *Deep Mining* and *Nanotechnology* let them dig deeper. Deposits run out, at which point the Advisor will report that the miners are staring at a hole. **Resource Revelation** reveals every deposit in an area and lets miners there dig one level deeper.



STONE



IRON



COAL



OIL



URANIUM



QUANTUMITE

ROADS, RAILWAYS & BRIDGES

Followers wear paths between nearby towns, and linked towns **share goods and ideas**: technology spreads along roads, surplus food flows to hungry neighbours and armies march faster. Roads improve with knowledge: dirt paths become stone roads with *The Wheel*, then railways with *Railways* and highways with the *Combustion Engine*.

Where a road crosses a river, your followers build a **bridge**: timber, then stone, then iron truss for the railway and concrete for the highway. Floods, lightning, meteors and nuclear weapons can destroy bridges; the link rebuilds them in time.

To connect two of your towns yourself, select one, open *Local will* and press **Build road to...**, then click the other town. It costs a little mana depending on distance.



FIG. 8 A Post-Human heartland: arcologies linked by highways, rail and a river bridge.

TRADE

Caravans (later trucks) carry surplus goods between your towns automatically. With a **trade agreement**, they also travel into a rival's towns. Trade adds **prosperity** (faster growth, research and better health), spreads technology and faith both ways, and makes neighbours like each other. A war cuts the routes at once.

Once your people know *Shipbuilding*, coastal towns build harbours, and **sea trade routes** link ports across seas, lakes and rivers with sailing ships and later freighters.



CARAVAN



TRUCK



SAILING SHIP



FREIGHTER

POLLUTION

Factories, mines and big industrial towns breathe out smog. It drifts, spreads and slowly fades, but while it lingers it hurts health, harvests and faith, and kills forests. The **Pollution** overlay shows it (along with nuclear fallout). The *Ecology* and *Fusion* technologies and the *Ecological* doctrine reduce it; **Purify** scrubs an area clean.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

A trade route opened between Loamford and Thatchby. Everyone is suddenly an expert in cheese.

The air over Ironvale has become chewable. Health is suffering.

CHAPTER VIII

DIVINE WILL

You cannot tell a farmer which field to plough. You can, however, make it very clear that you would be pleased by more ploughing. The **Divine Will** panel on the left of the screen is how you do it.

PRIORITIES

Eight sliders, from 0 to 100, tell every one of your settlements what matters to you. Settlements split their workers accordingly and choose what to build next with your wishes in mind. Priorities are relative: raising everything to 100 is the same as raising nothing. A town can ignore your global will if you give it a **Local will** of its own (see the previous chapters).



FIG. 9 The Divine Will panel, doctrines and the rivals list.

	PRIORITY	EFFECT
	Food	Farms, foraging, fishing; more people work the fields.
	Materials	Wood and stone, and building faster.
	Mining	Mines and miners: iron, coal, oil, uranium, quantumite.
	Research	Scholars and labs; new technologies arrive sooner.
	Industry	Workshops: tools, weapons, factories.

	PRIORITY	EFFECT
	Military	Soldiers, weapons and military buildings. High values unlock airfields and silos.
	Religion	Priests and shrines: worship, faith and conversion. More mana.
	Expansion	Migration, new towns, roads.

DOCTRINES

Doctrines are the grand ideas your people live by. You may proclaim **up to two** at once from the two drop-down boxes under the sliders; press **Proclaim** to make it so. Each shifts your people's habits and nudges your priorities. Changing doctrine is a **reform**: it causes unrest for a while, and you must wait before reforming again.

DOCTRINE	EFFECT
Expansionist	Followers colonise aggressively.
Isolationist	Internal development. No foreign trade, stronger defences, better research.
Militarist	Higher military participation and better soldiers.
Scholarly	Research first. The soldiers are reading.
Industrial	Production above all. The sky turns a productive grey.
Agrarian	Fields and families. Higher food output and growth.
Devout	More worship, slower secularisation, stronger conversion.
Ecological	Lower pollution, slower extraction, forests regrow.

In the campaign, doctrines are unlocked as you complete worlds.

**HINT FROM THE HIGH PRIEST**

Pair doctrines that pull the same way. *Agrarian* with *Devout* makes a large, pious people and a lot of mana; *Scholarly* with *Isolationist* races through the ages but trades with nobody; *Militarist* with *Industrial* is exactly as friendly as it sounds.

THE RIVALS LIST

Below the doctrines is a short list of every god in the world, with its followers and its share of the world's worship. Keep an eye on it. When one god's share approaches three quarters, a cultural victory is close (see *Winning*).



CHAPTER IX

FAITH, WORSHIP & MANA

Mana is the breath of a god. Every miracle costs it and every prayer makes it. Understanding where it comes from is the difference between a god who moves mountains and one who moves pebbles, occasionally, with effort.

WORSHIP

Every settlement is a mixture of believers: the Status tab shows what share of its people pray to each god. Every person praying to you produces a steady trickle of mana; **priests** produce much more, and **shrines** (from Standing Stones to Neural Cathedrals) raise the worship of the whole town. **Sacred Ground** makes a whole area pray half again as hard.

Your mana pool has a maximum that grows with your number of followers. Mana you cannot hold is wasted, so spend it.

FAITH

Each town also has a **faith** level: how much its people believe at all. Faith rises with shrines, priests, a devout temperament and *witnessing miracles*, and falls with hunger, pollution, being hit by your own lightning and, above all, **progress**. Each era is a little more secular than the one before: a Post-Human arcology prays far less per head than a Primitive camp. Radio and Neural Networks erode faith further; *Theology*, *Techno-Theology* and the *Devout* doctrine push back.



WHERE MANA COMES FROM

- Every worshipper, everywhere, even in a rival's town
- Priests, much more than ordinary folk
- Shrines multiply the worship of the whole town
- Sacred Ground: worship $\times 1.5$ in an area
- Faith falls as eras advance: plan for it

CONVERSION

Faith spreads like gossip. Your religion seeps into a town from its owner, from shrines and priests, from neighbours, along trade routes and wherever miracles are seen. Rival gods do exactly the same to you. **Mass Conversion** forces the issue in a single town.

DEFECTION

When most of a town prays to a god other than its owner, and its people are unhappy, it may simply **defect**: renounce its ruler and join the god it worships, borders and all. This works in both directions. A devout neighbour can take your cities without firing a shot.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

In Grubbington, a cloud looked exactly like Oomph. Conversions followed.

Grubbington has renounced The Hillfolk and joined The Mudborn. Faith moved the borders.

Tallowdun has abandoned you for Grellda. They say it's not you, it's your miracles.



FIG. 10 *The faith overlay: how strongly each area believes.*

CULTURAL DOMINANCE

If three quarters of all the people in the world pray to one god, and keep doing so for three minutes, that god wins a **cultural victory** (if it is enabled for the game). The rivals list and the **Your worshippers** overlay (✱) show how close you are.



FIG. 11 *The territory overlay: whose land is whose.*

CHAPTER X

KNOWLEDGE & THE AGES

Your followers are curious creatures. Left alone they will discover agriculture, then pottery, then the wheel, then writing, and eventually a way to put a small sun inside a bottle. You cannot stop them. You can only point them in a direction.

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Technology in Megapop is **local**. Each settlement researches on its own, with its own scholars, and knows only what it has discovered or been told. Knowledge **spreads** along roads and trade routes, faster with Radio and Neural Networks, and can be stolen by spies. A remote village with no road may still be banging rocks together while the capital builds railways. Link your towns.

A town researches faster with a higher **Research** priority, a lab, the *Scholarly* doctrine, prosperity from trade, and miracles such as **Divine Inspiration** and **Mass**

Inspiration.

RESOURCES REQUIRED

Some technologies can only be discovered by a town that has the right material nearby or in store: Iron Working needs iron, Chemistry needs coal, Nuclear Fission needs uranium, Nanotechnology needs quantumite. The Research tab tells you what a town is missing.

THE FIVE ERAS

An era is not declared; it happens. A settlement enters a new era when it knows that era's technologies, and your people as a whole are counted in the era of their most advanced town. Each new era rebuilds every building in a new style, arms your soldiers with new weapons and unlocks new miracles.



PRIMITIVE

Huts, clubs and campfires. Everything is new, including the concept of a pot. Years pass quickly.



MEDIEVAL

Stone halls, churches, swords and roads. Earthquakes, floods and plagues become available to discerning gods.



INDUSTRIAL

Factories, railways, rifles and smog. Firestorms, storms and pollution. Faith begins to slip.



ATOMIC

Electricity, oil, tanks, aircraft, missiles and the bomb. Also missile shields, which you will want.



POST-HUMAN

Arcologies, drones, mechs, satellites and quantumite. Meteors, rifts, avatars, and the road to Ascension.



FIG. 12 The Industrial-to-Atomic transition: rail lines, smokestacks, a skyline under construction.



FIG. 13 Post-Human towers. The river is still the same river.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

TECHNOLOGY	NEEDS	RES.	WHAT IT BRINGS
PRIMITIVE ERA			
Agriculture	—		Seeds go in the ground, food comes out. Unlocks farms.
Stone Tools	—		Pointy rocks. Unlocks workshops and tools.
Mysticism	—		Your followers notice you. Unlocks shrines.
Pottery	Agriculture		Pots. Food spoils slower.
Masonry	Stone Tools		Stacking stones on purpose. Faster construction.
Archery	Stone Tools		Throwing sticks with sticks. Unlocks bows.
MEDIEVAL ERA			
Shaft Mining	Masonry		Digging down, a classic. Reach shallow deposits.
The Wheel	Masonry		Round. Paths become roads.
Irrigation	Pottery		Water goes where we say. Farms yield more.
Writing	Pottery, Mysticism		Now mistakes can be preserved. Research is faster.
Iron Working	Shaft Mining		Needs iron nearby. Unlocks swords, better tools.
Theology	Writing		Arguing about you professionally.
Feudalism	Iron Working, Writing		Someone is in charge of the pointy people.
Engineering	The Wheel, Shaft Mining		Arches, cranes, and opinions about both.
Espionage	Writing		Trained informers. Enables spy missions: scouting, stealing ideas, sabotage and sedition.
Shipbuilding	The Wheel		Keels, oars and a healthy fear of the sea. Coastal towns build harbours: fishing, and trade routes over water.
INDUSTRIAL ERA			
Deep Mining	Engineering		Very down. Reach deep deposits.
Chemistry	Writing, Iron Working		Needs coal. Things now explode on schedule.
Steam Engine	Engineering, Iron Working		Needs coal and iron. Kettles, but ambitious.
Medicine	Chemistry		Fewer leeches. Healthier people grow faster.
Rifling	Chemistry, Steam Engine		Needs iron and coal. Unlocks rifles.
Railways	Steam Engine		Roads, but on time. Linked towns get railways.

TECHNOLOGY	NEEDS	RES.	WHAT IT BRINGS
Industrialization	Steam Engine, Deep Mining		Workshops become factories. Nobody asked the trees.
Sanitation	Medicine, Engineering		Pipes. Cities can grow much larger.
ATOMIC ERA			
Electricity	Steam Engine, Chemistry		Lightning, but tame and on a bill. Research and industry improve.
Radio	Electricity		Ideas travel at the speed of static. Technology spreads much faster.
Oil Drilling	Deep Mining, Chemistry		Needs oil nearby. Ancient swamps, finally useful. Unlocks oil wells.
Combustion Engine	Oil Drilling, Industrialization		Needs oil. Controlled explosions in a box. Unlocks tanks and motor roads.
Automatic Weapons	Rifling, Electricity		Rifles, but impatient. Unlocks modern infantry.
Green Revolution	Sanitation, Combustion Engine		Fertiliser, tractors and optimism. Farms yield far more.
Ecology	Medicine, Electricity		Someone finally counted the fish. Pollution is greatly reduced.
Nuclear Fission	Electricity, Chemistry		Needs uranium. Splitting the unsplitable. Industry surges.
Rocketry	Combustion Engine, Chemistry		Going up, mostly on purpose.
Nuclear Weapons	Nuclear Fission, Rocketry		Needs uranium. Unlocks missile silos. Your followers can now end things.
Missile Defense	Rocketry, Radio		Hitting a bullet with a bullet. Sometimes. Unlocks interceptor sites.
Deterrence	Nuclear Weapons, Radio		Automatic retaliation: if struck by a nuke, stored warheads launch back without asking.
Flight	Combustion Engine		Heavier-than-air machines. Airfields build bombers and defend the skies.
POST-HUMAN ERA			
Computers	Electricity, Radio		Thinking machines that mostly play solitaire. Research accelerates.
Neural Networks	Computers		The machines now finish your sentences. Ideas spread instantly; faith erodes.
Techno-Theology	Neural Networks, Theology		Integrates science and faith. Secularisation slows, worship rises.
Genetics	Medicine, Computers		Tomatoes that apologise. Farms and health improve.
Robotics	Computers, Automatic Weapons		Unlocks combat drones. The robots have been told they are 'helpers'.
Fusion Power	Nuclear Fission, Computers		Twenty years away for a very long time, now here. Industry surges and pollution drops.
Orbital Satellites	Rocketry, Computers		Eyes in the sky: every rival settlement becomes visible.
Nanotechnology	Robotics, Fusion Power		Needs quantumite. Very small machines, very large invoices. Unlocks mechs.
Arcologies	Nanotechnology, Genetics		Whole towns in a single tower. Housing expands enormously.
Ascension Theory	Arcologies, Orbital Satellites, Techno-Theology		Needs quantumite. Unlocks the Ascension Project: complete it for a Technological Victory.



CHAPTER XI

THE BOOK OF MIRACLES

Thirty-three powers, from lifting a single hillock to tearing reality open. They unlock era by era as your people learn to imagine them. Locked powers stay on the bar, greyed out, and tell you what they need when you hover them.

WHERE YOU CAN CAST

Your land means inside your own territory. **In sight** means anywhere your followers can currently see (fog of war permitting). **Explored land** means anywhere your people

have ever seen. **Anywhere** means anywhere. Divine Vision, spies and allies all extend what you can see.

HOSTILE MIRACLES

Lightning, earthquakes, plagues, fires, storms, floods and their cousins aimed at another god's land are acts of hostility. Cast one on a god you have a **truce** with and the truce is broken, with consequences for how everyone regards you. Your own followers are not immune either: smite your own town and they will take it personally.



FIG. 14 *Fertility falls on a young village. The vegetables look unusually determined.*



PRIMITIVE ERA



RAISE LAND

2 / vertex • recharge 0s • hold on land • your land

Lift the ground one step. Costs 2 mana per vertex that moves.



LOWER LAND

2 / vertex • recharge 0s • hold on land • your land

Press the ground down one step. Water may have opinions.



FLATTEN

1.5 / vertex • recharge 1s • area • your land • radius 2

Level a small area so your followers can build on it.



FERTILITY

45 mana • recharge 20s • area • your land • radius 3 • lasts 120s

Blesses the soil. Farms and foragers in the area yield much more for two minutes.



HEALING RAIN

50 mana • recharge 20s • area • your land • radius 5

A gentle rain: puts out fires, eases plague and drought, and waters the fields a little.



SACRED GROUND

60 mana • recharge 45s • area • your land • radius 4 • lasts 600s

Consecrate land for ten minutes: settlements inside worship half again as much, and faith there grows.



LIGHTNING

35 mana • recharge 6s • spot • in sight • radius 1.6

Smite a spot. Kills soldiers, burns buildings, forests and roads.



DIVINE VISION

30 mana • recharge 15s • spot • anywhere • radius 12 • lasts 60s

See a distant land for a minute. Your followers insist they 'just had a feeling'.



PROMISED LAND

40 mana • recharge 30s • spot • anywhere • radius 6 • lasts 300s

Mark a place for your followers to settle. Migrants will head there.



MUSTER

10 mana • recharge 4s • spot • your land

Call soldiers from your settlements to gather at a point.



ATTACK

20 mana • recharge 8s • enemy town • explored land

Send your armies and part of your garrisons against an enemy settlement. Declares war.



RETREAT

free • recharge 2s • instant • anywhere

Bring every army and fleet home.



MEDIEVAL ERA



EARTHQUAKE

160 mana • recharge 60s • area • in sight • radius 4

Shakes the land and everything on it. Unlocks in the Medieval era.



FLOOD

120 mana • recharge 60s • area • in sight • radius 4

Rivers burst their banks: low buildings and roads near water are damaged, fires drown, armies are swept away — and the silt leaves the fields fertile.



DIVINE INSPIRATION

90 mana • recharge 40s • a town • your land • lasts 150s

One of your settlements has a very good idea. Local research ×2.5 for two and a half minutes.



MASS CONVERSION

150 mana • recharge 75s • a town • explored land

Visions and suspiciously convenient weather. Part of a settlement's people turn to you. If most of a town worships you, it may defect.



PLAGUE

140 mana • recharge 90s • a town • in sight

Visit a pestilence on a settlement. It spreads along roads and trade routes — including back to you.

**NAVAL STRIKE**

20 mana • recharge 15s • enemy town • explored land • radius 2

Send every warship within range against an enemy coastal settlement: fleets fight on the way, bombard the town and blockade its harbour. Declares war.

**INDUSTRIAL ERA****PURIFY**

70 mana • recharge 20s • area • your land • radius 4

Cleanses pollution and radiation from the land. The air smells faintly of pine.

**STORM**

160 mana • recharge 75s • spot • in sight • radius 5

Summon a storm that sweeps across the target: wrecks buildings, scatters armies, grounds aircraft, douses fires.

**FIRESTORM**

130 mana • recharge 60s • area • in sight • radius 3

Starts a spreading fire. Forests and towns burn until rain or luck stops it.

**RESOURCE REVELATION**

60 mana • recharge 45s • area • explored land • radius 10 • lasts 600s

Reveal every deposit in the area for ten minutes. Your miners dig one level deeper there.

**ATOMIC ERA****AIR RAID**

25 mana • recharge 20s • enemy town • explored land • radius 3

Send every bomber within range against an enemy settlement. Anti-aircraft and interceptors shoot back. Declares war.

**MISSILE SHIELD**

160 mana • recharge 150s • area • your land • radius 9 • lasts 100s

A dome of divine interference over an area for 100 s: enemy missiles aimed inside it are almost always destroyed in flight, and half of any bomber wave is shot down.

**MASS INSPIRATION**

220 mana • recharge 120s • instant • anywhere • lasts 60s

Every one of your settlements researches twice as fast for a minute.

**COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT**

150 mana • recharge 80s • area • in sight • radius 10 • lasts 120s

Silence the airwaves: towns in the area stop sharing ideas and trading, armies lose coordination and missile defence goes blind.

**EMP**

180 mana • recharge 70s • area • in sight • radius 7 • lasts 45s

Fries electronics: interceptors lost, factories stall, silos and airfields go dark, missiles and bombers in the area fall from the sky, tanks, drones and mechs are crippled.

**NUCLEAR STRIKE**

60 mana • recharge 90s • spot • explored land • radius 6

Authorise your followers to launch a stored warhead from a silo. Everyone will remember who did it.

**POST-HUMAN ERA****METEOR**

380 mana • recharge 120s • spot • in sight • radius 3

Call down a star. Leaves a crater — and a fresh deposit of quantumite.

**DIVINE AVATAR**

500 mana • recharge 240s • spot • your land • lasts 150s

Manifest in person for a while: select yourself and right-click a place to walk there, an enemy town to smite it, or use Attack. Worshipers are thrilled.

**MATTER FABRICATION**

300 mana • recharge 120s • a town • your land
Conjure strategic matter into one of your settlements: crystal, uranium, oil and iron. Physicists are asked not to look.

**TIME DILATION**

260 mana • recharge 120s • area • in sight • radius 6 • lasts 60s
Bend time for a minute: your own towns in the area work twice as fast, everyone else crawls at a third of the speed.

**REALITY RIFT**

450 mana • recharge 150s • area • in sight • radius 5
Tear the world open. Terrain goes wild, buildings vanish, strange crystals appear.

COMMANDS

Muster, Attack, Retreat, Naval Strike and **Air Raid** sit on the power bar with the miracles but are orders rather than wonders; they are described in the chapters on war. They cost a little mana because even soldiers need encouragement.

**HINT FROM THE HIGH PRIEST**

Sculpting is cheap, and it is the most powerful thing you can do. A flattened plain, a moved river, a lake that cuts an enemy road, a ridge that gives your archers the high ground: the land remembers every change and your followers will use it for centuries.



CHAPTER XII

WAR

Sooner or later, somebody wants somebody else's river. War in Megapop is fought by your followers, with the weapons their towns have made, over the land you have shaped. You decide when and where; they decide how bravely.

SOLDIERS

Every settlement keeps some of its people as **soldiers**, more with a high **Military** priority, a barracks, the *Militarist* doctrine or *Feudalism*. Soldiers carry the best weapon their

town has in store: its workshops forge clubs, bows, swords, rifles and so on as technology allows, from wood, iron, coal, oil and quantummite. A town with rifle technology but no coal will still be fighting with swords.

When enemies arrive, every town also calls out a **militia** of ordinary citizens, poorly armed but numerous.

	UNIT	NEEDS	QUALITY	SPEED	TYPE	COST PER SOLDIER
	Clubmen Clubs	—	1	1	melee	1 
	Archers Bows	Archery	1.6	1	ranged	2 
	Swordsmen Swords	Iron Working	2.6	0.95	melee	2  0.5 
	Riflemen Rifles	Rifling	4.6	1.05	ranged	1.5  1.5 
	Infantry Machine guns	Automatic Weapons	7.2	1.1	ranged	2  1 
	Armour Tanks	Combustion Engine	11.5	1.6	ranged	5  2 
	Drone swarm Combat drones	Robotics	16	1.8	ranged	2  1  1 
	Mechs Mechs	Nanotechnology	26	1.25	ranged	6  1 
	Divine Avatar Divine avatar	Divine Avatar power	80	1.5	melee	—

ARMIES: MUSTER, ATTACK, RETREAT

Muster calls soldiers from your settlements to gather at a point you click, forming an army there. **Attack** sends your armies and part of your garrisons against an enemy settlement, and **declares war** if you were not already at war. **Retreat** brings every army and fleet home.

DIRECT ORDERS

Click one of your armies to select it, then **right-click**:

- on open ground: march there and hold;
- on an enemy town: attack it (if that means a new war, a second right-click confirms);
- on one of your own towns: defend it.

An army ordered against a town it cannot reach on foot will march to a harbour and take ship (see the next chapter).

MORALE & SUPPLY

An army fights until its **morale** breaks, then it runs. Losses, long marches and hunger drain morale; victories and rest restore it. Inside your own territory armies are supplied; outside, they live on what they carried, and after a few minutes they begin to starve and dwindle. Plan short campaigns, or campaigns that end in a captured town.

THE LIE OF THE LAND

Battles are decided by numbers, weapons, morale and ground:

- **High ground** gives the defender up to a 40% advantage. Raise a ridge in front of your town.
- **Forests** blunt archers and riflemen.

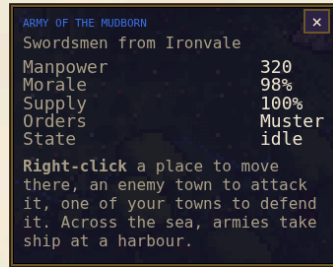


Fig. 15 An army's panel: manpower, morale, supply, orders.

- **Rivers** are hard to cross under fire, until there is a bridge.
- **Towns** fight better behind their walls, the more so the bigger they are, and with a barracks.

SIEGES & CAPTURE

An army that reaches an enemy town besieges it. If it defeats the garrison and militia and holds the town for a short while, the town is **captured**: some of its people are lost, the rest start learning which god to thank, and the town, its buildings and its territory become yours.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

An enemy army approaches Loamford from the east. The militia is looking for its shoes.

Our army won a battle near Redcainr. The survivors are telling it differently already.

Redcainr is ours. The locals have been informed which god to thank.

EARLY WARNINGS

The Advisor warns you when armies march on your towns, when troops mass at your border and when a rival's appetite for war rises. The **Threat** overlay (△) shows where danger is gathering.

HELPING FROM ABOVE

A god is worth an army. **Lightning** kills soldiers where they stand, **Earthquake** and **Storm** scatter them, **Flood** sweeps them away, **Firestorm** burns them out of forests. **Healing Rain** and **Sacred Ground** steady your own people. Late in the game, **EMP** cripples tanks, drones and mechs, and the **Divine Avatar** lets you walk the earth in person: select yourself and right-click where you want to go, or an enemy town to smite it.



The disagreement at Redcainr: armies meet; the god intervenes; the aftermath is described as "crispy".



CHAPTER XIII

SHIPS, PLANES & SPIES

🦅 AT SEA

With *Shipbuilding*, coastal towns build harbours. Harbours feed their towns with fish, open sea trade routes and, when there is danger about, build **warships**: up to four per harbour, galleys at first, then ironclads and finally destroyers.



GALLEY
Medieval



IRONCLAD
Industrial



DESTROYER
Atomic & later



TRANSPORT
carries armies

Naval Strike sends every warship in range against an enemy coastal town. The fleet fights any enemy ships on the way, then **bombards** the town (buildings, soldiers and morale) while its coastal defences fire back, and **blockades** its harbour: fishing falls to a third and sea trade stops. Harbours scramble their own ships against enemy fleets that come close.

Select a fleet and right-click to command it directly: water to sail, an enemy coastal town to bombard, your own port to come home. Storms, lightning, eruptions and (for modern ships) EMP all damage fleets.

LANDINGS

Order an army against a town across the water and it will march to one of your harbours, board ships (warships escort it if there are any, otherwise plain transports carry it) and land on the nearest beach from which it can reach the target. If the transport is sunk, the army goes down with it. Rival gods do all of this too.

🦅 IN THE AIR

With *Flight*, towns with oil, flat land and a Military priority of 35 or more (or a war) build **airfields**. Each airfield keeps up to four **bombers**.

Air Raid sends every bomber in range against an enemy settlement: they burn buildings and kill soldiers and townsfolk. Anti-aircraft fire from interceptor sites, airfields and modern barracks shoots back; storms knock planes out of the sky; survivors fly home to rearm. A **Missile Shield** over the target shoots down half the wave before it arrives.

🦅 ESPIONAGE

With *Espionage* (Medieval era), select a foreign settlement and send a spy from its panel. Each mission costs some tools and one follower.

MISSION	EFFECT
Scout	See the town and its stores for four minutes.
Steal tech	Bring home a technology they know and you do not.
Sabotage	Damage silos, airfields, factories or stockpiles.
Incite	Lower their morale and faith and stir up doubt about their god.

Barracks, radio, the *Isolationist* doctrine and capital cities all catch spies. A caught spy angers its victim, a hostile mission more so. Rival gods run spy rings of their own; the Advisor will mention it when a cheese merchant is unmasked in one of your markets.



CHAPTER XIV

THE ATOMIC QUESTION

At some point in the Atomic era, one of your towns will discover *Nuclear Weapons*, and a tip will appear to tell you that your followers can now end things. This chapter is about when you should let them. The short answer is: rarely. The long answer follows.

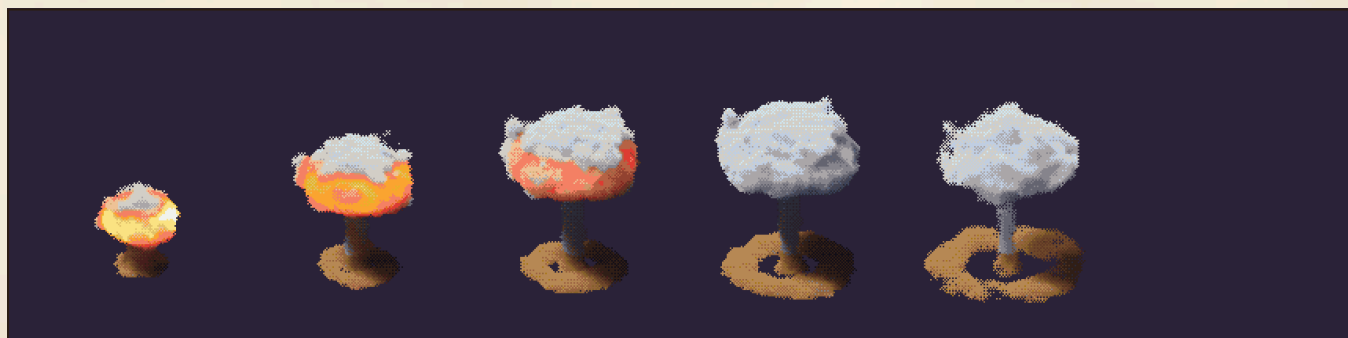
SILOS & WARHEADS

A large town with Nuclear Weapons and a Military priority of 40 or more (or a war on) builds a **missile silo**. The silo slowly assembles **warheads** from uranium, iron and oil, and stores up to three. The Advisor announces each one in a suitably serious tone.

LAUNCHING

Nuclear Strike authorises your followers to launch a stored warhead at a point you choose on explored land. The missile rises from the nearest silo, arcs across the sky where everyone can see it, and comes down about nine seconds later. What it hits is destroyed:

- buildings, roads, bridges and forests in the blast are levelled;
- most people and nearly all soldiers in it die;
- a permanent **crater** is punched into the land (it often fills with water);
- **fallout** spreads over a wide area and fades only very slowly;
- refugees flee, and **every god in the world thinks worse of you**, for a long time.



The detonation, from flash to fading smoke, as the Advisor's instruments recorded it.

DEFENCES

Missile Defense lets towns build interceptor sites. Each stores interceptors that fire at incoming missiles within range; each missile gets a couple of chances to be shot

down, and each chance is roughly a coin toss. Better than nothing, not as good as you would like.

Missile Shield is the god's own answer: a dome of divine interference over an area for 100 seconds, inside which enemy missiles are almost always destroyed in flight and half

of any bomber wave is shot down. Rival gods raise one over their towns when a missile is on its way, so strike when their mana is low.

EMP fries electronics in a wide area for 45 seconds: silos and airfields go dark, missiles and bombers fall from the sky, interceptors are lost, factories stall and tanks, drones and mechs are crippled.

Communications Blackout blinds missile defence, along with trade and the spread of ideas.

DETERRENCE

A god that has learned *Deterrence* launches its stored warheads back automatically the moment it is struck. Nobody has to decide anything. That was the point.

CLEANING UP

Fallout poisons the land, sickens towns and kills forests. **Purify** cleans pollution and radiation from an area. The **Pollution** overlay shows fallout in sickly colours.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

MISSILE LAUNCH DETECTED from The Hillfolk. The sky is about to have an opinion.

The missile aimed at Mudhollow was intercepted. Somebody's aim was very good today.

A nuclear blast has struck Karnak Hill. The advisors have no joke for this.



HINT FROM THE HIGH PRIEST

The bomb is best used as a reason for others not to use theirs. A god with warheads, interceptors, a Missile Shield charged and Deterrence researched is a god nobody attacks lightly. A god who fires first will face a very long list of very angry neighbours.

CHAPTER XV

DIPLOMACY

Gods talk to one another, mostly through envoys who would rather be elsewhere. Press **G** or the scales button on the top bar to open the diplomacy panel. It shows every god you have met, what they think of you and how likely they are to start a war.



FIG. 16 The diplomacy panel after a war and a peace: opinions both ways, war risk, proposals and the timeline of recent events.

WAR RISK

Under each god, a **war risk** line reads *Low*, *Watchful*, *High* or *Imminent*, with the reasons: they dislike you, they have troops at your border, they believe they would win, and so on. Rival gods also leave newly met human gods alone for a while at the start (longer on easier difficulties).

PROPOSALS

From the panel you can:

RELATIONS

Between any two gods there is **war**, **peace**, a **trade agreement** or an **alliance**. Trade agreements open foreign trade routes. Allies share their vision and join each other's defensive wars. A peace after a war begins with a **truce** of a few minutes during which neither side may attack.

OPINION

Two bars show what they think of you and what your people think of them. Hover *Their opinion* for the reasons: temperament, shared borders, shared or rival faith, trade, treaties, fear of whoever is winning, and a long memory of past deeds. An arrow shows which way it is moving.

- **Propose peace**, **trade** or an **alliance**;
- **Cancel** a treaty (breaking treaties is remembered, by everyone);
- send a **gift** of 50 mana to improve relations;
- **demand tribute**: a weaker, frightened god may pay you mana rather than fight (refusing, or ignoring you, only angers them);
- at war, **ask for one of their towns** as the price of peace, or **offer one of yours**;
- **declare war**.

Rival gods send you proposals too, including tribute demands and, when they are winning, offers of peace in exchange for one of your towns. The diplomacy button shows a badge while an envoy is waiting; proposals expire if you ignore them.

COALITIONS

When one god runs away with the game, holding far more than anyone else, the others notice. They start to like one another more and the leader less, and **coalitions** form against it. If that leader is you, expect company.

THE TIMELINE

The bottom of the panel keeps a history of recent wars, peaces, treaties and betrayals, including those between other gods. The Advisor also brings you news of distant wars and alliances as they happen.

FROM THE ADVISOR'S LEDGER

The Hillfolk propose a trade agreement.
Their envoy is waiting nervously.

The Mudborn and The Hillfolk are now
allies. Their gods have agreed to share
a cloud.

The Hillfolk broke a treaty with The
Damp Kingdom. Everyone is taking notes.



CHAPTER XVI

NATURE, WEATHER & DISASTER

The world was here before the gods and does not always consult them. Rivers run downhill, forests grow and burn, and now and then the mountain that had been quiet for so long decides otherwise.

LAND & WATER

Every world is generated from its seed: coasts, mountains, forests, rivers and lakes. Water finds its own level. Change the land and the rivers change with it; block a river and a lake forms behind the block; dig below sea level by the coast and the sea comes in. **Fertility** (the **F** overlay) decides where farms thrive: river valleys and flood plains are richest.

DISASTERS

Unless switched off, nature sends trouble from time to time: more of it on *Apocalyptic*, less on *Rare*. You can have the game pause or slow down when one strikes (see *Options*).

DISASTER	WHAT HAPPENS
	Drought Parched land, failing harvests and migration. Healing Rain ends it.
	Wildfire Spreads through forest and dry land into towns. Rain, rivers and luck stop it.

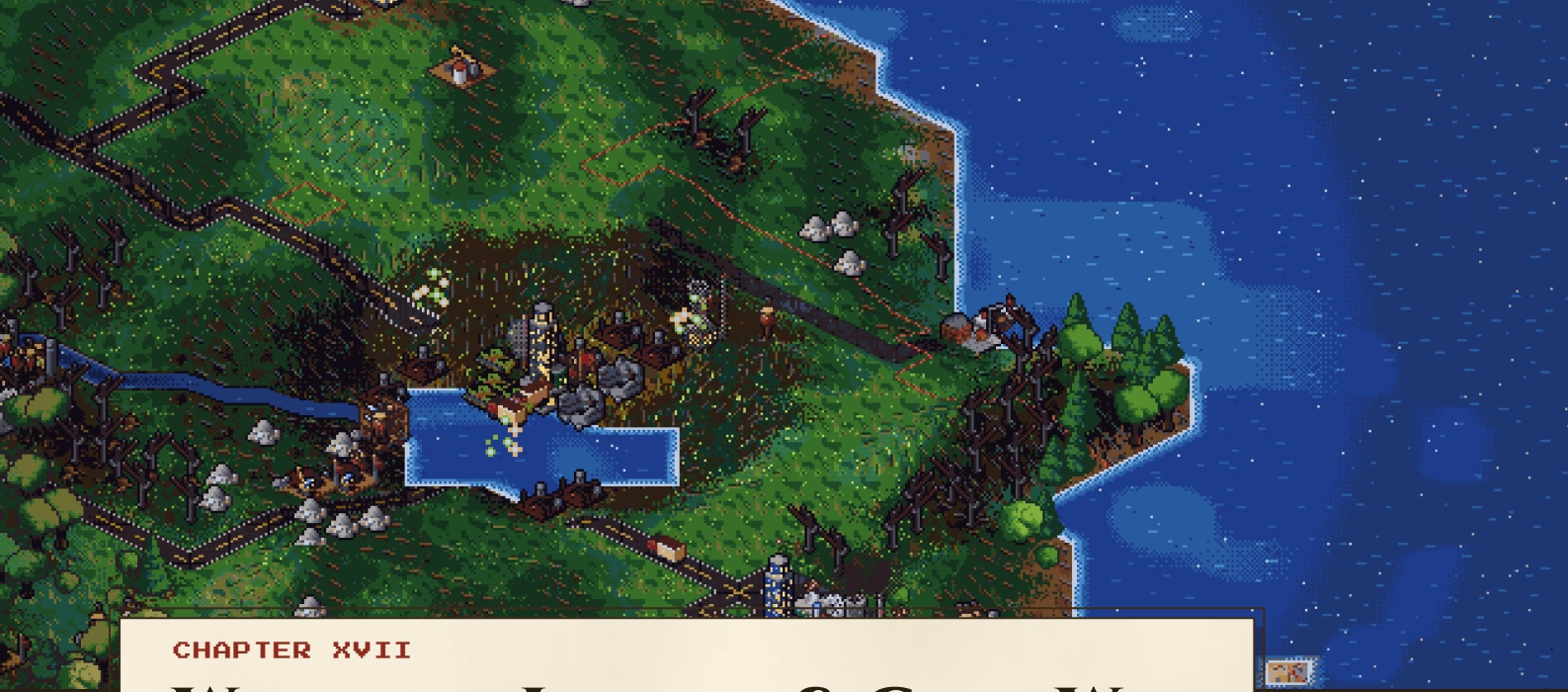
DISASTER	WHAT HAPPENS
	Plague Travels along roads and trade routes. Medicine and Healing Rain help.
	Storm Roams across the land: wrecks buildings, scatters armies, grounds aircraft.
	Eruption & quake Volcanoes raise new mountains; quakes shake buildings down.
	Meteor Leaves a crater and a fresh deposit of quantumite.
	Tsunami & flood The sea reclaims the coast; rivers burst their banks.

DAY, NIGHT & SEASONS

A day lasts eight minutes. At dusk the towns light up: hearth fires in the early eras, glowing windows from the Industrial era onwards. A year lasts sixteen minutes: green spring, gold summer, russet autumn and a grey winter when snow creeps down the mountains. Rain showers pass over, snow falls in winter and storms bring downpours.

All of this is scenery: it does not change the simulation, and you can switch day and night or weather and seasons off in the menu.

FIG. 17 *Winter. The goats have been told.*FIG. 18 *Autumn in the Medieval era.*FIG. 19 *A spring shower. The umbrellas are out, reverently.*FIG. 20 *Dusk: the first hearth fires.*



CHAPTER XVII

WINNING, LOSING & CIVIL WAR

There are several ways to become the greatest god in the world, and only one way to stop being a god at all: run out of followers.

CONQUEST

Be the last god with followers. Every rival people eliminated, every rival god reduced to a god of nothing in particular.

CULTURAL DOMINANCE

Have three quarters of all the world's people worship you, and hold it for three minutes. It can be switched off when creating a world.

ASCENSION

Late in the Post-Human era, *Ascension Theory* (which needs quantumite) lets your largest town begin the **Ascension Project**, an enormous work of stone, iron and quantumite. Every god is told when construction begins, and every god knows exactly where it is. If it is completed, your people transcend and you win. Expect visitors. It can be switched off when creating a world.



SCORE

If the world has a time limit, the god with the highest **score** when time runs out wins. Score counts followers, settlements, technologies, eras and soldiers.

DEFEAT

When your last follower is gone, so are you. The Advisor will make a note.

CIVIL WAR

Empires fray at the edges. Towns far from the capital, with no road home, low morale or faith, weak devotion, recent conquest, war weariness or choking pollution slowly build up **separatism**; the Status tab lists it among the town's problems, and the Advisor warns you when pamphlets start circulating.

When a town is ripe it declares independence, often with its neighbours, as a **free state** (green or orange). A free state has no god of its own: its people still pray to you, so you keep their mana, but it will fight you. You can reconquer it, or make peace and keep it content until it rejoins of its own accord.

Civil wars can be switched off, or made more frequent, when creating a world.



HINT FROM THE HIGH PRIEST

Keep your empire connected. A road home, a shrine and a full granary are cheaper than a reconquest. When a distant town grumbles, give it a Local will that favours Food and Religion for a while.



CHAPTER XVIII

THE SEVEN WORLDS

The campaign is the story of one god's long career across seven worlds, from a quiet valley where it has just woken up to the ruined battlefield of the Last Congregation. Each world has its own map, its own rivals, a briefing and a set of objectives, shown in a small panel on screen while you play.

THE ARK

When you win a world, you choose how many of your followers board the **Ark** (up to fifteen per cent of them). They travel with you and arrive in the next world as your founding people, a **legacy population** that gives you a head start. Take too many and the world you leave behind will not miss them; take too few and you start the next world short-handed.

I. THE CRADLE

PRIMITIVE START

1 RIVAL

DISASTERS LOW

"A quiet valley, a lazy neighbour, a god who has just woken up. Grow. Build. Try not to smite anyone important."

Objectives:

- Reach the Medieval era
- Hold 6 settlements

Unlocks: Agrarian, Devout, Expansionist, Scholarly doctrines

II. TWIN RIVERS

PRIMITIVE START

1 RIVAL

DISASTERS NORMAL

"Two rivers, two gods, one of whom is spoiling for a fight. It is not you. Yet."

Objectives:

- Eliminate the rival god

Unlocks: Militarist, Industrial doctrines

III. THE ASH ISLES

MEDIEVAL START

2 RIVALS

DISASTERS HIGH

"Volcanic islands where the ground has opinions and the sky throws rocks. Survive long enough to matter."

Objectives:

- Survive 40 minutes
- Hold 5 settlements at the end

Unlocks: Isolationist, Ecological doctrines

IV. THE IRON AGE OF MEN

INDUSTRIAL START

3 RIVALS

DISASTERS NORMAL

"Factories, railways and three rival gods with the same idea. Win, by sword, smoke or sermon."

Objectives:

- Win the world (conquest, culture or ascension)

V. THE SCHISM

MEDIEVAL START 2 RIVALS

DISASTERS NORMAL

“Your people are many, far-flung and tired of hearing from you. Keep them together, or win them back.”

Objectives:

- Hold 12 settlements
- Reach the Industrial era
- No free state of your people remains

Unlocks: Devout doctrines

VI. THE SKY WAR

ATOMIC START 3 RIVALS

DISASTERS NORMAL

“Three rival gods, airfields on every hill and spies in every market. Hold on.”

Objectives:

- Survive 30 minutes of total war
- Hold 8 settlements at the end

VII. THE LAST CONGREGATION

ATOMIC START 3 RIVALS

DISASTERS NORMAL

“A ruined, glowing world. Every god who survived the other worlds is here, with whatever followers they saved. This is the end of the story, one way or another.”

Objectives:

- Be the last god — or ascend



CHAPTER XIX

MANY GODS AT ONCE

Up to four human gods can share a world, with computer gods filling any empty seats. Everyone plays on their own computer, each running the game from their own copy.

SETTING UP

Each player starts the game with **run.bat** (browsers only allow WebGPU on a local address). On the title screen, choose **Multiplayer**. The host tells the others the address shown in the host's server window (for example *192.168.1.20:8000*); everyone types it as the **Server address** and uses the same **Room code**. The host presses **Host**, the others **Join**. Over the internet the host must forward TCP port 8000, or use a relay server (see the DEPLOY notes that come with the game).

CONNECTIONS

- **Network relay:** messages pass through the host's server.
- **Peer-to-peer:** players connect directly; the server only introduces them.
- **This computer:** several browser tabs on one machine, for hot-seat play or testing.

HOW IT WORKS

Every player's computer runs the whole world in **lockstep**: every order (miracles, priorities, doctrines, diplomacy, spies) is scheduled a moment ahead and carried out by every computer at the same instant. Every few seconds the computers compare notes; if one has drifted, the host sends a fresh copy of the world and everyone carries on. Game speed and pause are shared. The panel at the top right shows who you are waiting for; **Enter** opens the chat.

DROPPING OUT & COMING BACK

A player who goes silent for fifteen seconds is dropped and the computer takes over their god. Press **Join** again with the same room code while a game is running; if you use the **same name** as before you get your own god back; a newcomer takes over a god whose player has left, or a computer god. If the host disappears, the others continue on their own.



A WORD ON FRIENDSHIP

Alliances between human gods are the most fun and the least stable institutions in the known universe. Remember that everything you do on an ally's land is seen by your ally.



CHAPTER XX

OPTIONS & SOUND



FIG. 21 The pause menu.

MUSIC & SOUND

Every era has its own music, and the ambience follows what the camera sees: birds and wind, rivers and surf, towns and markets, later trains, sirens and the hum of reactors; crickets at night and a muffled hush in the snow. World sounds are positional, fading with distance and panning left and right.

THE SOUND EDITOR

Every sound in the game is defined in a data file and can be replaced. Run `sfx_editor.bat` to open the **sound editor**: play each sound as the game does, drag in your own WAV,

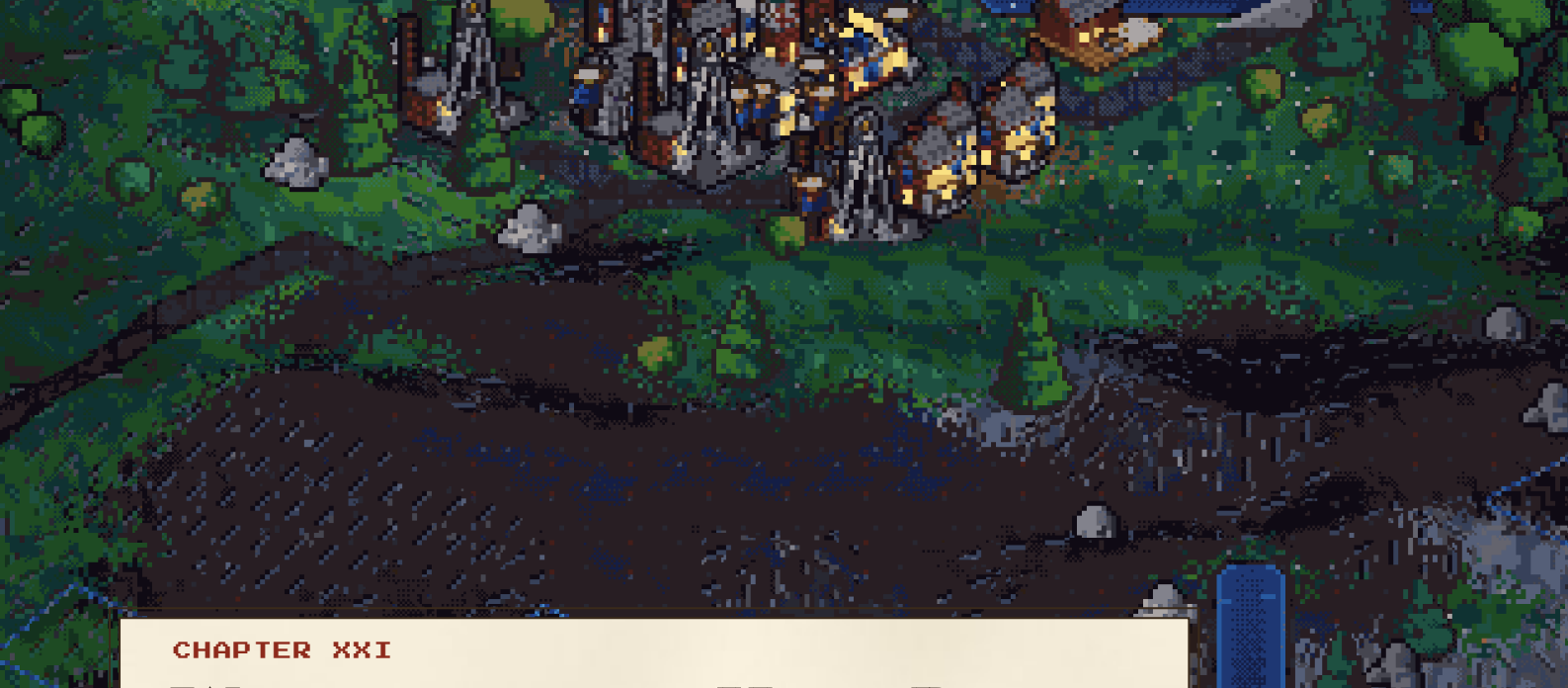
Press **Esc** for the menu. The game pauses while it is open (except in multiplayer, where the world waits for nobody).

SETTING	EFFECT
Sound / Music	All sound on or off; music on or off.
Volume	Master, effects, music and ambience.
Slow down on attacks	Drop to 1× speed when your towns are attacked.
Pause on disasters	Pause when a disaster strikes.
Palette filter	The game's own colour palette, or raw colours.
Terrain shading	Smooth or flat-shaded land.
Screen effects	Shakes, flashes and glows (see the warning at the front).
Day & night	The day cycle and town lights.
Weather & seasons	Seasons, snowlines, rain and snow.
Army size labels	Numbers over armies and fleets.
Tutorial & tips	Show one-off tips; <i>Restart tutorial</i> runs it again.

MP3, OGG or FLAC files, set volume, pitch and cooldown, remap which game event plays which sound, choose ambient beds and music, and export a list of prompts for making new sounds. A sound with no files of its own can borrow another sound, or fall back on the built-in synthesiser, so the game is never silent.

FOR THE CURIOUS

F1 opens a debug panel with performance figures, a military threat overlay and the rival gods' current thinking. It is mostly for developers, and for gods who like to know what the other gods are plotting.



CHAPTER XXI

WISDOM OF THE HIGH PRIEST

The High Priest has served many gods. Most of them are no longer with us. He offers the following, free of charge, with the gentle suggestion that a larger shrine would not go amiss.

1. FLATTEN FIRST, FLATTEN OFTEN.

Nine problems in ten are really a shortage of flat land. The Status tab will tell you; your followers will not stop mentioning it.

2. RIVERS ARE GOLD.

Towns on rivers are fertile, trade easily and grow fast. Towns on hilltops defend well and grow slowly. Found both.

3. MIND THE PROMISED LAND.

Settlers go where it is good for them, not for you. A Promised Land on a fertile plain between you and a rival claims it before they do.

4. CONNECT EVERYTHING.

Roads carry food, knowledge and soldiers. An unconnected town is a town that falls behind, and eventually a town that breaks away.

5. WATCH THE AGES TURN.

Each era your people pray less per head. Build shrines ahead of it, and consider Devout or Techno-Theology.

6. SPEND YOUR MANA.

A full mana bar is wasted worship. Bless fields, inspire scholars, flatten plains.

7. PICK YOUR BATTLES, AND YOUR GROUND.

Defend on high ground, behind rivers, inside large towns. Attack in short campaigns that end in a captured town before supply runs out.

8. READ THE WAR RISK.

Watchful becomes High becomes Imminent. A gift, a trade agreement or a tribute paid at the right moment is cheaper than a war.

9. NEVER BE THE RUNAWAY LEADER TOO EARLY.

Coalitions form against whoever is winning big. Grow quietly, then all at once.

10. KEEP A SHIELD IN RESERVE.

In the Atomic era, keep enough mana for a Missile Shield. The one time you need it, you will need it immediately.

11. USE THE SEA.

A naval landing behind the enemy line is worth three frontal assaults. A blockaded port starves.

12. LOOK AT THE OVERLAYS.

Resources tell you where to settle, faith tells you where you are losing souls, threat tells you where the axes are.

"A god is only as great as the people who remember him. Try to leave some."

— THE HIGH PRIEST



CHAPTER XXII

QUICK REFERENCE

CONTROLS

W A S D / arrows	Pan
Right / middle drag	Pan
Wheel, PgUp / PgDn	Zoom
Q / E	Rotate view
Left click	Select
Right click	Order selected army/fleet, cancel
1 ... 0	Powers 1–10
Shift + 1 ... 0	Powers 11–20
Alt + 1 ... 0	Powers 21–30
Tab / Home	Next town / capital
Space	Pause
+ / -	Game speed
G	Diplomacy
Esc	Cancel / close / menu
Enter	Chat (multiplayer)
F1 or `	Debug panel

SYMBOLS

 MANA	 FOLLOWERS	 SETTLEMENTS	 SOLDIERS	 FAITH	 RESEARCH
 TRADE	 WAR	 PEACE	 ALLIANCE	 WARHEAD	 POLLUTION
 RADIATION	 REBELS	 SPY	 HARBOUR	 AIRFIELD	 ROAD
 HIGHWAY	 WEAPONS	 THREAT	 LOSSES	 SCORE	 ASCENSION

SETTLEMENT TIERS

 CAMP	 VILLAGE	 TOWN	 CITY	 METROPOLIS
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Settlements grow by population and number of buildings. Territory widens with each tier.

OVERLAYS

The buttons under the minimap tint the world with hidden information. These are the same stretch of land, some twenty minutes into a game, under each overlay.



TERRITORY



FERTILITY



RESOURCES



POPULATION



FAITH



TECHNOLOGY



POLLUTION & FALLOUT



MILITARY THREAT



YOU ARE A GOD.

A small one.

Raise continents and dig lakes. Bless the harvest and smite the heretics. Guide a people from the campfire to the stars, through five ages, thirty-three miracles and one extremely regrettable afternoon in the Atomic era. Your followers will farm, build, pray, invent, argue and march to war all on their own. Your job is to make sure they do it for *you*.



Five eras · seven worlds · up to four gods · one planet, give or take a crater

PROJECT MEGAPOP